

C.) AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method of preparing a preform for a RTM molding process comprising the steps of:
forming a layer of reinforcing fibers;
applying a patterned discontinuous, homogenous liquid layer of a tackifier resin to at least one side of the layer of reinforcing fibers; wherein a predetermined quantity of the tackifier resin being forced into a number of the fibers; and
curing the tackifier resin, the curing step not including water evaporation.
2. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the patterned discontinuous layer of tackifier resin is applied by a patterned roller.
3. (canceled)
4. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the patterned discontinuous layer of tackifier resin is applied by at least one spray nozzle.
5. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the layer of reinforcing fibers is selected from the group consisting of unidirectional fibers, bi-directional fibers and random mat.
6. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the tackifier resin is selected from the group consisting of thermosetting resin, thermoplastic resin, EM wave activated resin and self curing resin.
7. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the tackifier resin is applied in a quantity of about ¼ percent to about 10 percent of the areal weight of the reinforcing fiber.
8. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the tackifier resin is applied in a quantity of about 30 volume percent to about 40 volume percent.
9. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the patterned discontinuous layer is in the form of a herringbone pattern.
10. (original) The method of claim I further comprising forcing an effective quantity of tackifier resin into an effective number of fibers.
11. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of preparing the tackified reinforcing

fibers for shipping.

12. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein the tackified reinforcing fibers are wrapped onto a roll.

13. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein the tackified reinforcing fibers are cut and stacked.

14. (original) The preform for a RTM molding process produced by the method of claim 1.

15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)

17. (canceled)

18. (currently amended) A method of preparing of preparing a fiber-reinforced composite article for use in a gas turbine engine, comprising the steps of:

forming a layer of reinforcing fibers;

applying a patterned discontinuous, homogenous liquid coating of adhesive tackifier resin in a predetermined amount to at least one side of the layer of reinforcing fibers to form a tacky ply, wherein a portion of the predetermined amount of the tackifier resin being forced into a number of the fibers;

assembling a plurality of the plies ~~plys~~ to form a preform, the predetermined amount of adhesive tackifier resin being sufficient to maintain the assembled plies in a shape of the preform;

placing the preform into a mold; then

injecting a second resin in liquid form into the mold to form a continuous matrix of resin between and around the plies of the preform; and

curing the preform to form a near net shape article.

19. (original) The method of claim 1 further comprising forcing a predetermined quantity of tackifier resin into a number of fibers as the tackifier resin is applied.